5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

575 [883] [178] The societies known as Little Birds, Mosquitoes, and Doves are not really bands of the All Comrades, but are societies among the boys and young men in imitation of the *I-kun-uh'-kah-tsi*, but of comparatively recent origin. Men not more than fifty years old can remember when these societies came into existence. Of all the societies of the *I-kun-uh'-kah-tsi*, the Sin'-o-pah, or Kit-fox band, has the strongest medicine. This corresponds to the Horns society among the Bloods. They are the same band with different names. They have certain peculiar secret and sacred ceremonies, not to be described here.

The society of the Stum'-iks, or Bulls, became obsolete more than fifty years ago. Their dress was very fine,—bulls' heads and robes.

575 424 432 The members of the younger society purchased individually, from the next older one, its rights and privileges, paying horses for them. For example, each member of the Mosquitoes would purchase from some member of the Braves his right of membership in the latter society. The man who has sold his rights is then a member of no society, and if he wishes to belong to one, must buy into the one next [887] higher. Each of these societies kept some old men as members, and these old men acted as messengers, orators, and so on.

575 [344] The change of membership from one society to another was made in the spring, after the grass had started. Two, three, or more lodge coverings were stretched over poles, making one very large lodge, and in this the ceremonies accompanying the changes took place.

575 625 In later times, the Braves were the most important and best known of any of the All Comrades societies. The members of this band were soldiers or police. They were the constables of the camp, and it was their duty to preserve 689 order, and to punish offenders. Sometimes young men 522 would skylark in camp at night, making a great noise when

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

people wanted to sleep, and would play rough practical jokes, that were not at all relished by those who suffered from them. One of the forms which their high spirits took was to lead and p sh a young colt up to the door of a lodge, after people were asleep, and then, lifting the door, to shove the animal inside and close the door again. Of course the colt, in its efforts to get out to its mother, would run round and round the lodge, trampling over the sleepers and roughly awakening them, knocking things down and creating the utmost confusion, while the mare would be whinnying outside the lodge, and the people within, bewildered and confused, did not know what the disturbance was all about.

The Braves would punish the young men who did such things, — if they could catch them, — tearing up their blankets, taking away their property, and sometimes whipping them severely. They were the peace officers of the camp, like the *lari pūk'ūs* among the Pawnees.

Among the property of the Brave society were two stone-pointed arrows, one "shield you don't sit down with," and one rattle. The man who carried this rattle was known as Brave Dog, and if it passed from one member of the society to another, the new owner became known as Brave Dog. The man who received the shield could not sit down for the next four days and four nights, but for all that time was obliged to run about the camp, or over the prairie, whistling like a rabbit.

The societies known as Soldiers and Bulls had passed out of existence before the time of men now of middle age. The pipe of the Soldier society is still in existence, in the hands of Double Runner. The bull's head war bonnet, which was the insignia of the Bulls society, was formerly in the possession of Young Bear Chief, at present chief of the Don't Laugh band of the Piegans. He gave it to White Calf, who presented it to a recent agent.

In the old days, and, indeed, down to the time of the

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

piles to await the coming of spring. The disease spread from tribe to tribe, and finally reached the Blackfeet. It is said by whites who were in the country at the time, that this small-pox almost swept the Plains bare of Indians.

In the winter of 1857–58, small-pox again carried off great numbers, but the mortality was not to be compared with that of 1845. In 1864, measles ran through all the Blackfoot camps, and was very fatal, and again in 1869 they had the small-pox.

Between the years 1860 and 1875, a great deal of whiskey was traded to the Blackfeet. Having once experienced the delights of intoxication, the Indians were eager for liquor, and the traders found that robes and furs could be bought to better advantage for whiskey than for anything else. To be sure, the personal risk to the trader was considerably increased by the sale of whiskey, for when drunk the Indians fought like demons among themselves or with the traders. But, on the other hand, whiskey for trading to Indians cost but a trifle, and could be worked up, and then diluted, so that a little would go a long way.

As a measure of partial self-protection, the traders used to deal out the liquor from the keg or barrel in a tin scoop so constructed that it would not stand on a flat surface, so that an Indian, who was drinking, had to keep the vessel in his hand until the liquor was consumed, or else it would be spilled and lost. This lessened the danger of any shooting or stabbing while the Indian was drinking, and an effort was usually made to get him out of the store as soon as he had finished. Nevertheless, drunken fights in the trading-stores were of common occurrence, and the life of a whiskey-trader was one of constant peril. I have talked with many men who were engaged in this traffic, and some of the stories they tell are thrilling. It was a common thing in winter for the man who unbarred and opened the store in the morning to have a dead Indian fall into his arms as the door swung

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

open. To prop up against the door a companion who had been killed or frozen to death during the night seems to have been regarded by the Indians as rather a delicate bit of humor, in the nature of a joke on the trader. Long histories of the doings of these whiskey trading days have been related to me, but the details are too repulsive to be set down. The traffic was very fatal to the Indians.

The United States has laws which prohibit, under severe penalties, the sale of intoxicants to Indians, but these laws are seldom enforced. To the north of the boundary line, however, in the Northwest Territories, the Canadian Mounted Police have of late years made whiskey-trading perilous business. Of Major Steell's good work in putting down the whiskey traffic on the Blackfoot agency in Montana, I shall speak further on, and to-day there is not very much whiskey sold to the Blackfeet. Constant vigilance is needed, however, to keep traders from the borders of the reservation.

In the winter of 1883–84 more than a quarter of the Piegan tribe of the Blackfeet, which then numbered about twenty-five or twenty-six hundred, died from starvation. It had been reported to the Indian Bureau that the Blackfeet were practically self-supporting and needed few supplies. As a consequence of this report, appropriations for them were small. The statement was entirely and fatally misleading. The Blackfeet had then never done anything toward self-support, except to kill buffalo. But just before this, in the year 1883, the buffalo had been exterminated from the Blackfoot country. In a moment, and without warning, the people had been deprived of the food supply on which they had depended. At once they had turned their attention to the smaller game, and, hunting faithfully the river bottoms, the brush along the small streams, and the sides of the mountains, had killed off all the deer, elk, and antelope; and at the beginning of the winter found themselves without their usual stores of dried meat, and with nothing to depend on,

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850] 8: All in Fun

THE BLACKFOOT INDIANS were a far cry from those strong, silent, dead-pan caricatures of Indians commonly portrayed in the white man's western fiction and his motion pictures and television programs. They were really a fun-loving people who enjoyed funny stories, practical jokes, and a wide variety of games and sports. It is significant that they looked upon Old Man not only as the creator but as a humorous little fellow who went around trying to play tricks on people and animals and whose tricks sometimes backfired. Many Napi stories are not only funny, but obscene.[1]

The Blackfeet loved to poke fun at strangers, especially members of other bands. When a number of men gathered in a lodge to welcome a guest it was common for some of them to make indecent remarks about him. Should the guest appear annoyed at their jibes, they only intensified their efforts. It was the host's duty to prevent the joking from going too far. One Piegan band was noted for annoying visitors by a mock family row. The host began a quarrel with his wife. Neighbors rushed in and took the woman's part. In the general row which followed all fell upon the guest and roughed him up without doing him any serious injury.[2]

[1] Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, "Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, Vol. II, Part 1. A selection of Napi stories appears on pages 19–39.

[2] Clark Wissler, "The Social Life of the Blackfoot Indians," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, Vol. VII, 53.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6 Blood

horse to the bride; one horse was given to Wooden Ears who had been Charging Buffalo's partner in the Horn Society, and who, if one can trust custom, had made an appropriate gift because of that relationship; and the finest saddle horse was handed over to John Bruce in exchange for a nice large house that Charging Buffalo wished to occupy.

The more general society give-aways made demands particularly on the rich, but these demands were rarely resented. Irregular, and usually not onerous, they enhanced the prestige of the giver. In no way did they raise the status of those who received. Requests for special objects could, it is true, only be denied with loss of face, but no Blood would hesitate to circumvent expectation by resorting to the simple device of "shaming," well known long before the reserve period.[122] One example will suffice. In 1905 Mountain Pine led a fine buckskin horse to the corral. Crow Chief admired the animal saying, "I wish I owned that horse." Mountain Pine answered, "You can have it if you face to the east and cry 'Mama, I wish I owned such a horse.'" He then handed over the horse while the bystanders laughed heartily. It is not surprising that under these circumstances, Crow-Chief refused to accept it.[123]

Relationships within the age-grade societies were still a matter of group concern, and great efforts were made by the wealthier members to be "brotherly" and back up the poor. The methods employed were frequently devious. When Ghost Moon brazenly demanded a new saddle from Moose Dung, a poor member of Middle Bear's society, the latter felt impelled to satisfy the request to save his *taka's* face, without, however, benefiting him more directly.[124]

In these years of economic expansion, old ways of spending were exaggerated. Favorites were showered with expensive gifts and raiment. A saddle costing $80–$100, silver spurs, special boots, finely beaded blankets, all might be lavished on a small and favored son. He was initiated to many ceremonial objects for which large payments were made not only in horses, but in fine goods. As the herds grew these payments became more ostentatious. The Long Time Pipe alone sold several times for 100 horses.

Nor was it enough for a prosperous Blood to have one favorite. Many had two or more. Pointed Plume said he wanted to "treat his two boys alike." Others frankly stated they wanted to show how rich they were. To all it gave great satisfaction to add to prestige by conspicuous spending.

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[122] There are many ways in which shaming could be used to emphasize wealth differences. For instance, at a formal smoke where bundles were named and prices given, "Those having a long list were cheered, while those having a short one were ridiculed." (Wissler, *Ceremonial Bundles*, p. 276).

[123] Biele, Field Notes.

[124] *Ibid.*

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

younger people rather than keep on repaying the older as he had done after his own war parties. The younger men would return these gifts with interest after a successful raid. A stake in a household also changed his interest from seducing women to preventing their seduction. To ensure stability or overcome misfortune, he acquired sacred bundles and regalia. By virtue of the supernatural reinforcement derived from these bundles he achieved power in his utterances. 561

A second mechanism, age-grading, further organized the relationship of young and old. A boy with his comrades entered this hierarchy of six to twelve age-societies by purchasing from the age-group of his immediate elders their society regalia. Having held it four years, this group sold the regalia to its juniors and again bought the society regalia of the next older age-group. These societies held annual dances in the circle camp of the Sun Dance and solidified relations with one's own age-mates. Certain societies were also entrusted with various kinds of authority to maintain order in the camps. Between adjacent age-grades joking relationships existed, so that humorously turned but often keen-edged criticism furnished socially permitted opportunities for reprisal against the authority of one's elders. The relations of alternate age-grades were on the other hand friendly, thus effecting a dual division of the tribe with all ages represented in each half. In keeping with the authority of the elders was a progressive change in character of the societies with age. Not only did the price of membership increase so that fewer could afford to join as the series progressed, but to the older age-grades increasing supernatural powers were attached. Though the Bees for younger boys was mainly a large dancing society, the Horns at the top of the hierarchy had definite powers, rituals, and obligations of an extremely sacred character. 561 575 [522]

Today at the age of seven all Blackfoot children leave home to attend one of the two missionary boarding-schools on the reserve. The term begins late in August and continues until after the Sun Dance is over in the last part of June. On occasional Saturday nights the little children only may return home, but not until the two-months' summer vacation is there any prolonged contact with their parents. 872

School curricula are directed towards training the young for elementary literacy in English, Christian outlook, and familiarity with white techniques of living. English is taught in the classroom [A1]

824 PLANTS IN CRAFT AND FOLKLORE

Abies lasiocarpa

The needles were used as a deodorant and were packed with stored items, saddle pads, or burned in a household smudge.

Acer glabrum

[386] [415] Small cases of the folded bark contained the grease which was mixed with ochre to make paint. A larger carrying case was made of the same material and worn under the left arm.

Allium spp.

[237] A piece of hide was dipped in a decoction of Allium bulb and used to shine arrows. The bulbs were also rubbed on quivers as a deodorant.

Amelanchier alnifolia

[431] [524] [222] Favors were asked while presenting a gift of four of the berries. The receiver was obliged to return the goodwill. Girls played a game while harvesting the berries. After some berries had been gathered the girls would sit together and hold their breath while another called out 'tops, tops, tops' at a regular beat. Each girl put a berry in her bag for every call and the one who held her breath the longest won all the other girls' berries.

Anemone patens

[522] [514] Because the plant acted as vesicant, pranks were played on unsuspecting people who would ask someone to fetch them some toilet paper. It worked especially well at night.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi

534 [796] The dry berries were put in rattles (Fig. 33). They were preferred over stones because they were lighter and didn't make dust, a constant

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 109]

824 [281] Lomatium triternatum

Animal pelts which were used in bundles were stuffed with the fruits of this plant during the tanning process and that kept them from smelling.

[777] [237] A porcupine foot was stuffed with the fruits and tied on a young girl's hair as a good luck charm.

Lonicera involucrata

[262] The bush was named "bear eats them" because the berries were considered inedible by humans.

Lygodesmia juncea

[294] [281] [386] The stems, rich in latex, were crushed, put in a storage bag and later used as foot pads in moccasins. Also, newly tanned buffalo hides were ochred red with a mixture of the stem and ochre which actually waterproofed the hide.

Mammillaria vivipara

[522] Jokes were played on people by placing this cactus under covers, etc.

Monarda fistulosa

[758] [281] The dry flowerheads were used by invalids for sucking broth and soup. Women used the dry flowerheads to apply water to a green hide which made it easier to scrape the hide with even strokes.

Osmorhiza occidentalis

Pieces of the root were kept in quivers and clothing as a deodorant.

[294] The stems were combined with ochre and the mixture applied to robes.

Oxytropus sericea

524 824 Children made headdresses with the stems, lined up (alternating boys and girls) and danced single-file to different spots while singing this song in unison: "there's nothing behind my back". The seeds would rattle

752 It was a stiptic on wounds and boiled with Psoralea
824 esculenta to treat coughs. The infusion of the fungus was taken to stop
278 diarrhea and treat dysentery.
757

Populus tremuloides

534 Whistles were made by loosening the bark of a branch replacing it and
824 blowing through it. Another type of whistle was made by blowing through the moistened leaves.

824 Potentilla anserina
[291]

The runners of the plant were used to fix leggings in place. The leggings were tied above the knee and then folded over to the ankle, like a
[284] boot. Girls used the runners to tie blankets. Though the runners did not hold their strength long, they were easily replaced.

Potentilla fruticosa

The plant, a small bush, was called "deer seat" because the animals were often found resting in clearings where the plant was common.

[513] Pillows were sometimes filled with the leaves.

Prunus virginiana

[352] The straight branches were used in making back-rests (Fig. 36). The
[796] hard wood, which did not burn easily, was used in making incense tongs
[252] (Fig. 37) and roasting skewers.

Psoralea esculenta

[301] Pieces of the root were dried and attached to clothing and robes as ornamentation and medicine. Sometimes this root was scraped and used to replace the pieces of Polyporus which was attached to "Weasel-robes".

Ribes aureum

186 The Sarsi Indians were a constant source of humor to the Blackfoot.
522 Because they were Beaver Indians who were in the midst of adopting a plains

[XXI CONTINUED ON PAGE XX]

186 mode, they were often considered awkward and clumsy. For example, it is
522 said that they had to be taught to put ear-flaps on their lodges so that the smoke would be controlled.

824 This plant received the name, "Sarsi punctures-berry", because while the berries looked like the "real punctures-berry" (Ribes oxyacanthoidas), they didn't taste as good and were considered "fakes".

524 Ribes oxyacanthoidas
824 Children played a game with the berries of this bush. They sat in a circle and began counting to ten, each child counting one number around the circle. The tenth child would take five berries and eat them at once, trying his best not to show a bitter face. If he was successful, the child next to him would do the same and this would continue until one grimaced at the sour taste. He was then struck on the thigh with a knuckle-punch, thus giving the name "punctured-berry" to the plant. The child who never grimaced won all the others' berry supplies.

824 Rubus parviflora
[262] The berries were considered inedible and the plant named "bear-eats-them" to denote the fact.

The berries were used to dye tanned robes. They were smeared over a
[386] [281] new hide and dried in the sun. Then they were scraped off and the hide polished until it shone.

The berry was applied to quivers to strengthen them.

Salix spp.

[534] A buzzing whistle was made by loosening the bark around a branch and blowing through it.

[352] The boughs were cut and used in making back-rest slats and sweatlodge
[343] frames.

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,S (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

SikskiAki and I didn't ask the Old Man about the contrast between this story and the many sacred stories about Sun and Earth and their children. We knew the custom among our People to see all things in life in many ways—good, bad, and humorous. Many of these stories are not meant to be taken literally but to illustrate that everything in life can be seen in different ways. A common example of this attitude is the joking and fun-making that sometimes erupts spontaneously when a serious participant makes an error in the middle of a sacred ceremony. Human nature is often allowed to take precedence over serious ritual. If human nature causes people to laugh, then they should be allowed to laugh. Laughter, too, is a holy Way among people who live in harmony with nature.

773

522

[Beaver Bundle Ceremony]

at the same time yelling in low voices. [More songs.] The two wives of the priests took a bundle of sticks from the sacred bundle and swung them to and from the altar, keeping time. [The cawing and pecking were actually imitations of ravens, not crows. The rattles were usually made either from buffalo rawhide or from scrotums of buffalo. While pecking on the rattles of buffalo skin, the ravens sang, "The wind is our Medicine—Powerful dead buffalo we want," referring to the buffalo carcasses ravens feasted upon after hunters finished butchering them. When the singers first took up the rattles and beat them on the rawhide, they sang, "My rattles are Powerful." The sticks the women took were probably extra incense tongs, which were kept with every Beaver Bundle.] 796 778 533 [825] [534] [237]

In fourth song the two squaws got up and danced around the room, one holding a root digger, a stick sharpened at one end and one edge; this was painted red as were all the implements. Whistles were produced and tooted during the following songs. After three more were sung, Running Wolf took a pipe-stem and got down upon his knees and bobbed about in which performance he was soon joined by his wife and Three Bulls' wife. With their blankets drawn up around their heads, they kept up those singular antics, working their hands in imitation of the beaver. That ended by all three people, 3 times lowering their heads to the sacred bundle and grunting several times, and then they took hold of the outside covers and shook them as if to frighten away a spirit. During all this time, "Moons" wife, who is a great wag, was cracking jokes and making fun of almost every movement of Running Wolf. [This part of the ceremony, taken with light spirit, often evokes laughter when the Old People leading the ceremony try to imitate small animals at work. The amount of fun-making at our holy ceremonies would probably amaze a visitor. But our ceremonies are meant to bring happiness and harmony, not gloominess and 796 778 [535] [412] [531] [534] [533] [825] [522] 796 778 781

[Motokiks Society Dance, 1905]

some person lays hold of them and leads them to a seat. Two of the snake bonnets run around in the reverse way. The four bulls come in last and walk slowly around until pulled into their seats. 575 796

Like the horns and other societies the members sell, or transfer to others, usually all transferring at the same time. The ceremony seems to require four days and nights, during which time they are not supposed to sleep. . . . It is said that the entire night is given to hilarity. Joke and jest reign supreme. Some dress like men and act out the part, give orders to a wife, etc. Some roll up blankets like medicine bundles and hold mock ceremonies. . . . 575 796 432 [513] [522]

The fees for buying a membership are a horse, a gun, and other property. The most expensive place is that of the tipi pole owner for which twelve horses and a proportionate amount of other property are required. [424] [435]

Shortly after Atsitsina left, we went outside our tipi to watch the Motokiks. They were already beyond the camp circle, walking in single file from east to west, along the south side of the circle. We saw Mokakin take down a spare lodge pole leaning against the back of his tipi. An offering made of willow sticks, sage grass, and cloth was fastened to the pole. Mokakin had put the offering on the lodge pole before Sunrise, so that Sun could see where it came from. 575 796 782 [824]

The women sat down on the ground outside the south end of camp. Mokakin untied the offering and gave it to his son Charlie, along with a filled pipe and a bunch of sage grass, to bring to the women. Charlie presented these things to one of the members and knelt before her to receive her prayer. Then she lit the pipe and passed it around. After it was smoked out, she returned it to him. The women got up and, single file, moved [276]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 119-A]
[P. 118A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6 Blood

522
291
346

Omachki-gohkitotakin, or "Big Corner Post," in the Medicine Lodge of 1928. Big Corner Post was a dummy made up by a band of the same name. For four years it traveled all over the reserve on missions of humor. At Medicine Lodges it often served as the enemy in battle reenactments. The dummy met its end in a fire at the hands of an irate horse-owner. Someone had stolen the man's finest pinto and tied the dummy on top of it. On the following ration day, a crier went around and announced that Big Corner Post had been arrested for horse stealing and punished by being burnt up. In this photo, with the dummy, from left to right, are: Dog Child; old Bill Heavy Runner; and Rough Hair. (Glenbow Archives)

[552] [796] [203]

[P.309-A]

[Nighttime Ceremony, 1890's]

was made on a large coal of fire, not on the altar but between it and the fire. A feast of tongue soup was handed around and Moon prayed alone. He was followed by all the others, except some late comers who were handed their food and then prayed, as usual holding up a little piece [of tongue] and at the end of the prayer shoving it into the ground [as an offering]. Old Moon began the songs at 2:15, all the men and women joining in the gestures, comprising holding all the fingers up, tips touching, and the sign to take something and put it on the breast. While singing was in progress, a filled pipe was handed to the oldest man, who, holding stem to the sun, prayed in a loud voice, the others singing throughout. Squaws were in the meantime putting red paint on faces of children who were to be painted afterwards by Moon. Singing ceased and another pipe was handed to Moon, who turned the stem quite around. Then, pointing the stem up over the fire, he prayed and afterwards pointed it to the earth. . . . One Spot sat at right of Moon and Three Bulls at the left. One Spot now took off his shirt, moccasins, leggings, and presented them all to Moon, also a piece of tobacco. He retained only his blanket, which he now wrapped around himself. Moon renewed the songs, One Spot let the blanket fall and sat upon it naked [with his breechcloth on, I'm sure]. Moon took a piece of fat meat and with many waves and signs from altar to One Spot and all over the latter's body, he handed to him, who rubbed it all over the head, arms and legs and body then handed it to Moon, who, after passing it all over his own body, passed it to the left and it went around. Moon now took red paint and, with some signs, rubbed it on his body, arms, legs and all, the others remarking with laughter how fat he was. One Spot turned his back and Moon rubbed paint all over it. One Spot's hair was tied up over his head and Moon painted his face all red. One Spot's son, a child of six or seven years, was brought forward and stripped to the waist . . . painted by Moon. . . .

796 [262] [782] 796 533 [788] [276] [782] [302] [852] 796 302 788 [522] [852]

[p. 347-A]

22: Wissler & Duvall E,I-5 (1902-1907) 1908
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Piegan, since Henry was among the Northern Blackfoot (from whom our version was obtained), and Maclean seems to have secured his data from the Bloods. That the Blackfoot formerly had a well-defined creation myth, in which the Old Man took the initiative in producing and transforming the world, is indicated by several writers. Those noted above give more or less in detail a running account of the peopling of the earth and the instruction of mankind in the art of living. While these incidents do not occur in detail in the Old Man myths recorded in this paper, they are occasionally implied. Such origins are at present often assigned to the Old Man without the formality of a myth. It will be noted that the greater part of the tales collected by us recite the absurd, humorous, obscene, and brutal incidents in the Old Man's career. No ritualistic or ceremonial practices appear to be based upon any of these narratives, though it may have been otherwise in the past. On the other hand, connected with them are the suggestions of origins for many aspects of material culture, such as the buffalo-drive, the making of weapons, methods of dressing skins, etc. A considerable number of places and topographical features were associated with his adventures; as Old Man's River, Tongue Flag River, Old Man's Gambling-Place, Old Man's Sliding-Place, Rolling-Stone Creek, etc. In fact, there seems a tendency to give all of his adventures a definite location in what is now Alberta.

From the accounts of all observers, it appears that confusion exists in assigning some myths. Thus Grinnell records as adventures of the Old Man our myths containing the incident of the dog and the stick (p. 52), the placing of the crow in the smoke-hole (p. 51), the woman with a snake-lover (p. 130), and the rolling head (p. 154). We found differences of opinion on these and other tales, but have in our list the ones rarely if ever challenged. Taking into consideration all the data at hand, we are of the opinion that there has been a disintegration of the creative and cultural origin myths concerning the Old Man. This opinion is partly based upon the agreement of these myths with those attributed to similar characters among the Cree, Ojibwa, Fox, and other divisions of the Algonkin stock, for which a common origin is assumed, and also partly on the present attitude of the Blackfoot themselves toward these myths.

For several decades at least, the Blackfoot have considered the Old Man as an evil character, in most respects trivial, who long ago passed on to other countries. Whenever the writer asked if the Old Man was ever prayed to, the absurdity of the question provoked merriment. The usual reply was, that no one had enough confidence in him to make such an appeal. In daily conversation his name is often used as a synonyme for immorality. However, it must not be implied that he is regarded as an evil spirit. His

22: Wissler & Duvall E,I-5 (1902-1907) 1908
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

name is especially associated with things obscene, and pertaining to sexual immorality. I have heard the Piegan say that so and so "must be trying to be like the Old Man; he cannot be trusted with women."

We have occasionally noted a tendency to assign modern obscene anecdotes to this character, and it may well be that many of the tales long attributed to him have been accumulated by the laws of association. The unfortunate human tendency to appreciate keenly the humor in such anecdotes seems sufficient to account for their survival and accumulation long after belief in and respect for the Old Man as a creator, teacher, and transformer, has passed the verge of extinction.

Certain differences of opinion among former observers make it desirable to reconsider our assumption that these myths are survivals from a much larger group constituting the ancient basic beliefs of the Blackfoot. The first account we find bearing upon this point was written by Alexander Henry in 1809.[1] He speaks of "one first great white man and his wife" to whom all things are due, but states that he went to live in the sun and is called Nah-toos, while his wife went to the moon. Unfortunately, Henry is not sufficiently specific for the identification of the "one first great white man." Among the present Blackfoot people, Natos refers to the Sun-Man, whose consort is the Moon-Woman, a character regarded as distinct from the Old Man. The term used by Henry is probably a translation; for, in his comparative vocabularies, "Nappeekoon" is given as the equivalent of "white man," the term still applied to members of our race. This of itself makes it probable that Napiw[a] is the character referred to in the above.

Later, about 1874, R. P. Lacombe writes that Napiw[a] went to live in the Sun.[2] M. Lacombe is quoted by Hale (1885) to the effect that Napiw[a] and Natos are distinct, and that the former is a secondary character.[3] Maclean also states that Napiw[a] is a secondary character.[4] Grinnell (1892) expresses the opinion that Napiw[a] and Natos are the same and that the latter is a more recent conception.[5] It is of interest to note that the earlier writers are disposed to treat Natos, the Sun, as the home of the Old Man, while the later ones make each a character. My own information is emphatic in indicating a present distinction between the two. This is supported by the following statement from a man for many years an interested observer of Blackfoot customs: —

"The Sun is then the principal deity.... Equally erroneous is the view that they addressed prayers to, or in any manner worshipped, 'Napi,' the Old Man of the legends, the blunderer, the immoral mischief-maker."[6]

1 New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, op. cit., pp. 827, 828.
2 Petitot, op. cit., p. 804.
3 Hale, op. cit., p. 704.
4 Canadian Savage Folk, p. 52.
5 Grinnell, op. cit., p. 258.
6 R. N. Wilson, Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1908, p. 799.

Buffalo Robes

In the daytime, save for the shouting of children at play, the great camp was quiet; but with the setting of the sun it livened up. Men began shouting invitations to their friends to come and feast and smoke with them. Members of the various branches of the *Ikuni Kahtsi* (All Friends warriors society) got together to sing and dance. At once in a hundred lodges there were various social gatherings—gatherings of old men, young men, old women, young women, chiefs and leading warriors, Sun priests. Evening always found me joining one or another of the lodge-fire circles to listen to the talk, and so I heard great tales of war, of hunting, and of the wondrous doings of the gods. In greatest demand were the tellers of humorous stories; they had so many invitations to social gatherings that they were rarely found at home. And theirs was clean humor; one never heard any obscenity in the lodges of the Blackfoot tribes.

What George Catlin had to say of the Mandans he visited in 1832—that they were kindly, courteous hosts—was equally true of the old-time Blackfeet. A man giving a feast-and-smoke stepped outside his lodge and shouted his invitations. One by one the guests came and were seated according to their standing in the tribe. The more prominent a man was—such as chief, Sun priest, warrior—the nearer he would be placed to the host. When all were seated, the women of the lodge placed dishes of food, the choicest that they had—boiled or broiled buffalo tongues, buffalo dorsal ribs, berry pemmican, stewed berries—before them, and the host, not eating, began cutting finely a mixture of tobacco for the smokes. At the same time he started the talk about something of general interest, or, perhaps, called on a certain one to tell of some thrilling experience he had had in hunting or at war; or, as often happened, a Sun priest would talk about the gods or relate a powerful vision that the gods had given him in the night. As the talk went on, all ate slowly, moderately, and in most pleasant manner, of their portions. Contrary to the general opinion of them, the Indians, anyhow the Blackfeet, were not gorgers of great quantities of food.

When all had finished eating, the host passed the filled big-stone bowl with its long stem to someone of the circle to light from the fire—always a Sun priest if one were present—and he, touching a coal

chief of the downriver bands, he moved his All Black Faces to a location between the Knife Owners and the All Tall People, and when the Orphans were formed, they moved to the Knife Owners' camp.

Although the bands were no longer flexible in their movements, they were in their naming practises. Under new conditions, some of the bands received new names as fresh incidents occurred. The Followers of the Buffalo, whose name was outdated, became the Camps in a Bunch. The Many Children were renamed the Mules and later became the Small Robes, the Shooting Up became the Interfering, the Lone Fighters were the Middle Reserve People, and the Knife Owners were called Blocking the Road.

After the turn of the century, many families began to leave the confines of the Belly River to start their own farms and ranches, thus breaking up the traditional band structure. The new groups, usually made up of people from several bands, also received band-like nicknames, but these were usually based upon their geographical locations. These included the Big Corner Posts, the Deadman's Corner People, Shore People, and the Tall Trees. Of these, the latter seemed to embody best the humor or disdain so often found in earlier band naming practices, for the Tall Trees were located in one of the most barren and treeless areas on the Blood Reserve.

[p.104-A]

122 533 the Chief would thunder in the correct phrase. Jimmy said, after a didactic interruption by his father, "Goddam! He interfered with me and now I can't get back where I'm going." The whole thing was really very relaxed and informal, though, with a lot of laughing and clowning around. At one point, Jim put a large funnel on his [522] head in gesture of crowning himself with a dunce-cap for having goofed up. The only time that a serious note discorded the proceedings was when Paul started to sing a Cree song. The Chief got on him right away and said that he could damn well sing Blackfoot songs or not at all. So they tried to sing some Blackfoot "Crazy Dog" songs and immediately got all screwed up. "Sound like bunch drunks," Jimmy said.

122 [126] I played back the songs, but the recorder had distorted the music something terrible. So I turned the damn thing off, and while the singers gave out with a few more selections I made a large pot of coffee. Paul and his wife both looked starved, so I heated up some bean soup too. At the table, Paul's wife took her soup spoon directly from her toothless mouth, plunged it into the sugarbowl, and stirred a heaping tablespoonful of sugar into her cup of coffee. Oh well, she sings beautifully. And I don't use sugar anyway.

I am afraid that the Chief's cold is no better. He sneezed loudly at the table, and Phillip said, with a tone of lachrymose poignancy, [827] "In a old days when you sneezed we used to say your girl friend is thinking for you. Now-days we say you better get to that drug store and get you some medicine."

After I had driven all the guests to Paul's house, Jim and Dad and I each drank two hot toddies. It was still reasonably early, and the medicine songs had induced Dad into a story-telling mood, and as we sipped our drinks he told some medicine stories.

YELLOW WOLF VISITS THE SAND HILLS

539 764 [73] [164] [165] This happened during the big measles [one of the several epidemics of small pox which struck the Blackfoots]. A lot of Piegans died at this time, and among them was Yellow Wolf. We cared for Yellow Wolf in the same manner that we cared for the others that had passed away: we dressed him in his best clothing and placed a blanket over him and kept him for two days in his lodge. On the second night, when Yellow Wolf's relatives and friends had all arrived and were sitting around the lodge preparing for the funeral, one of the relatives suddenly said, "The blanket is moving!" Then, as everyone

122 *11:00:* Jimmy just came in with an armful of wood and said, "Goddam! It's a cold outside! Guess I got wear cap today." He asked me whether I had seen his hat, but he said it in Blackfoot and I didn't understand him at first because instead of using the word for hat (*ist-tsím-o-kahn*) with which I am familiar, he used "*o-toh-kahn-o-kós-toh-mok*," which refers specifically to a cap or hat which has a round shape. He was right about it's being "a cold outside," though; I know because a short while ago I borrowed the Chief's overshoes and went down for two buckets of water. The butane tank is empty, but there is a wood fire going in the kitchen and it is nice and warm in there and as soon as my water heats I am going to take a bath. The wind is really strong outside, blowing the snow almost horizontally.

Night: Well, I'm clean! While the Chief dictated a letter to Jim (for me to type up), I took a bucket bath—what my old Texas friend, Cap Fowler, calls a "possible" bath. Cap described the procedure as follows: "First you wash down as far as possible; then you wash up as far as possible; and then you wash possible."

After lunch the Chief wanted to go to town, but when he stepped out onto the porch and felt the power of that wind he changed his mind. So instead he seated himself in a chair and sang some of his [533] old war songs, accompanying himself by pounding on the floor with [538] his cane, and the war songs put him in a story-telling mood so I [126] turned on the recorder and the Chief expounded in detail the preparations which the Blackfoots made for going to war. He began 829 by remarking that the White Man has done a magnificent job of misinterpreting and misrepresenting the Plains Indian culture. As Jimmy interjected, "Always make Indians look like bunch damn [546] fools." This phase of discussion arose from the fact that the film, *Chief Crazy Horse*, is coming to the local flick. Indian films, and [522] other comedies, are quite popular on the Reservation, and the older [301] Blackfoot ladies are especially titillated by the fact that the movies always portray an Indian maiden wearing a beaded headband with 562 a feather sticking in it. The beaded headband is itself both con- 30 temporary and ersatz, and it was at one time considered indecent 237 of an Indian woman to adorn herself with feathers. The Sun Dance Holy Woman wore a small plume tied at one side of her head, and Blackfoot women frequently did (and still do) wear their husband's or boy friend's hats while the menfolk are dancing, but certainly no Plains Indian woman in the old days went around with an eagle feather sticking up behind her head.

721 Considering the relative lateness of his appearance upon the

122 602 tives are relatives only because of the singular concept of family relationship held by the Blackfoots. As a for instance, the first person I met at the Dance—a friendly chap named Joe Scabby Robe—immediately informed me that we were kith and kin. As I got the family portrait, Joe Scabby Robe is Earl Old Person's brother-in-law; and since Stanley White Man is also Earl's brother-in-law, and since Stanley is some kind of distant kin to some branch of the Chief's family (by one of his wives, I guess), and since I am now the Chief's son, that makes Joe Scabby Robe and I something-or-other. Which means that I am also related to the only orally deprived child on the Reservation, because Joe was leading by the hand the first thumb-sucking Indian kid I have ever seen. [157]

122 82 [115] But, relative or not, Joe Scabby Robe is a willing and capable informant and I like him. The wind was rising all the time and the clouds were moving thick in the sky, and Joe pulled up the collar of his maroon nylon jacket and pointed far off to the northeast and said, "You see that big hill down there with the clouds on top? That means storm. We call that hill 'Sweetgrass Hill,' us Indians, and we say when Sweetgrass Hill has got a hat on, that means storm."

This led to a discussion of the unusual weather that the Reservation has been seeing lately, and Jimmy said, "Corn to [according to] some people says, it's that Adam bomb. I don't know what the real made it, but we sure having a funny weather."

122 157 522 As we talked, some friends of Jim drove in and parked nearby. And as soon as the car had stopped, Jim called out, "Hey, when you was driving that car your wheels was going round." Now this was probably the most un-funny remark ever made by an Indian (or anybody else), but everyone in the car laughed heartily. And this brings up an important point: the popular belief that Indians are cold, stoical, sober-sided and full of stiff and pompous dignity could not be further from the truth. Indians have marvelous senses of humor; they love to laugh, and even if your quip is not at all funny, your Indian audience will laugh in appreciation of the fact that you at least made the effort at affability.

522 Strangely enough, Indian humor is neither as sadistic nor as scatological as the humor of Western Whites. The Western White frequently finds humor in physical or mental deformity or in the various biological processes of both men and animals. This, I am convinced, derives from the days on the frontier when a deformity or physical malfunction was a very serious thing because it meant that you could not pull your own weight; there was no room for sympathy in

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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the frontier struggle for survival. But the Indians have been leading a rough existence for a much longer time than the Whites, and their humor has mellowed to a gentler flavor (although I am told that the good ladies—*as usual*—can spin some pretty curly yarns).

Indians are especially fond of linguistic humor, including puns and quidproquo jokes, and Joe Scabby Robe immediately seized upon the moment of Jim's effort to tell me one:

"Once a White man was hunting elk with a Blackfoot guide, and when the White man saw an Elk on a far-away ridge he raised up his gun to shoot. But the elk was too far away to shoot at yet, so the Blackfoot Indian he said, *'Kick-kah, kick-kah.' You* know that *'Kick-kah'* means 'wait' in the Blackfoot language, but that White hunter he didn't know that, so he says to that Indian, 'Kick 'im hell! I'm goin' shoot him.'"

As Jimmy and Joe and I stood chatting, several people came up and asked to be introduced to me (Jimmy says that I am getting to be quite well known on the Reservation, especially among the old-timers). Finally there approached an older woman whom Jimmy introduced as Mary Ground, the lady that was sponsoring the Pipe Dance. Mary Ground has a rather light skin, gray-blue eyes, and she speaks flawless English. Despite her being dressed in a fine Indian costume, with beautifully beaded, shin-length moccasins of smoked buckskin, I thought at first that she must be White or of mixed blood. I still do not know for certain, but I soon learned that Mrs. Ground speaks Blackfoot beautifully, enunciating all the difficult Blackfoot sounds with a clarity that was a revelation to me. Especially interesting was her articulation of the alveolar nasal semivowel [n], which in the Chief's idiolect is sometimes indistinguishable from the lateral alveolar semivowel or bilateral continuant [l].

After a brief chat, Mrs. Ground said that the Pipe Dance ceremony would not start for about another hour, so Jim said, "Shit, I'll had me little nap," and he went to the station wagon, slumped down in the front seat, pulled his hat down over his eyes and went to sleep. Mary went back inside the house; the Chief was already inside, talking with some friends; Mrs. Scabby Robe had taken the child to the outhouse, and this left Joe and I on our own. This was fine with me, because Joe was an eager and knowledgeable source of local color and information and in talking with him about Indian religious beliefs I became more than ever impressed with the tolerant and unhypocritical way in which the Blackfoot Indian finds room within the framework of his philosophy for both the Christian dogma and his own spiritual inheritance.

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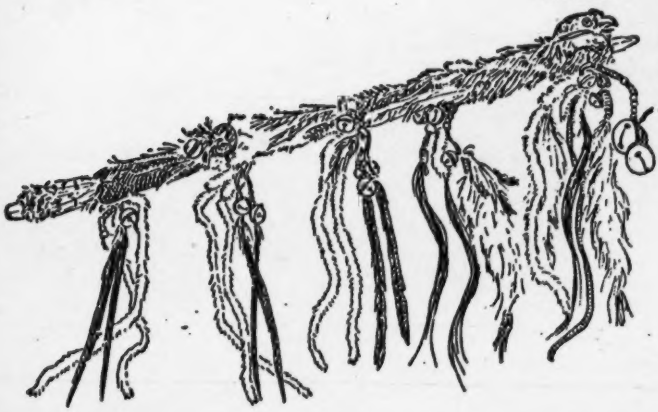

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bowled, peace-pipe variety) was passed around and puffed on by both men and women. In addition to puffing on the pipe, the smokers blew the smoke into their hands and made a gesture of cleansing their bodies with it. They passed me by, though, and I was rather wounded by the slight, I must confess. 122 796 778 276

Actually the Pipe Dance ceremony was conducted as a series of separate events, with breaks between them. During the breaks, everyone was free to talk and joke and practically everyone, male and female, rolled Bull Durham cigarettes. It is fascinating to see those gnarled old fingers perform so expertly the delicate task of rolling a cigarette. I can't do it. The Blackfoot word for Bull Durham, incidentally, is *Stá-mek-shay-ahp-stá-kan*—which suggests that in Blackfoot, as in language generally, the tendency is toward ease of utterance. The Blackfoot language (typically) also contains several alternate terms for the same product (Bull Durham), one of which (*Ah-boot-ski-nahp-stahk-kan*) translates as "Cow tobacco." Cigarette is *Ik-ka-móne-nape* or *Móne-yee-mahn*, depending on whether you roll your own or smoke tailor-mades. The secret of speaking fluent Blackfoot, I have decided, consists in three simple rules: (1) never use the same noun more than once a year; (2) if you must use the same old noun twice, pronounce it differently or at least change the vowel stress; (3) when in doubt, calculate by the sun and divide by the moon. 122 796 276

The outstanding aspect of the Pipe Dance was the over-all 796 522

796 attitude of relaxed sincerity coupled with the inevitable Indian good
522 humor. Sometimes the old functionary would forget the chants and have to back up and start again, or someone else would foul up in some detail of ceremony (the drummers never once goofed), but nobody seemed to think that he would be damned to the unhappy hunting ground because of his error. Instead, everyone just had a good laugh at himself and then carried on. The Indian belief gives God credit for having a sense of humor, which is more than I can say for some other, rather dreary religious persuasions.

122 About midway of the ceremony, there was a long break for lunch.
796 Brought into the room were large baskets of food and a big kettle
262 of something which turned out to be berry soup. And the huge coffeepot and another tremendous pot containing hot tea. Everyone —man, woman, and child—was given a plate piled high with food. And I mean *piled high.* I was handed a paper plate stacked with a big chunk of boiled beef, three frankfurters, two boiled eggs, soda crackers, grease bread, cookies, two big pieces of berry cake and an orange. This in addition to a mug of tea.

I was having too much fun to be really hungry, so I gave away (to the kids) everything except the berry cakes, which were delicious, and the tea. Then Mary Ground sought me out and handed me a paper cup filled with the thick berry soup. It was marvelous—slightly tart, the way I like things—and I drank it all and went looking for more. The soup, the main ingredients of which are juneberries (serviceberries) and bitterroots, is almost identical to something the Swedes call fruit soup. When I was a fumbling undergraduate—before I became a fumbling graduate—I wrote a paper attempting to suggest a valid relationship between Algonkin, of which Blackfoot is a subdivision, and Old Norse (an idea which did not originate with me but which I still consider worthy of pursuit). My instructor ridiculed my sophomoric efforts, suggesting, with typical Germanic vitriol, that I should instead attempt to prove that the Blackfoots were the Lost Tribes of Israel. But he (aha!) had never tasted berry soup. (I had not attempted to trace the origin of the Blackfoots themselves but only certain aspects of their culture.)

122 After lunch, the ceremony continued, and during the afternoon
796 the actual dancing took place. Only the men danced, and each man
535 danced individually. The dancing of the American Indian today follows a pretty universal pattern, I think. At least I cannot distinguish
177 the dancing patterns of the Sioux, the Crow, the Cheyenne, the
[292] Arapahoe, the Shawnee, the Pueblo or the Blackfoot one from the other, and this of course can be attributed to the same wide cultural

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torical Blackfoot tales as a youngster by having the old-timers recite them to him, over and over, until he knew every word (rather in the same manner that the Rig-Veda was passed from generation to generation in India, but of course lacking the formality which attended this linguistically important ritual of the ancient Brahmin religion). The Chief said that the old-timers had been very patient and generous but that sometimes they would tease him, and he illustrated the nature of this teasing by relating an actual incident. 538 861

THE BATTLE AT SIX PERSONS

A group of us youngsters were sitting around listening to some of the old-timers tell stories. There was Looking For Smoke, Big Spring, Morning Eagle and some others. Morning Eagle was telling us about the time that a Blackfoot war party was fighting against some Crows at a place called Six Persons. The Blackfoots were doing all right for themselves until they ran out of ammunition, at which time six of them got killed. Finally Morning Eagle said, "I see plenty of ammunition around here," and he began to point to various small sticks that were lying around the ground. Then he took from his pocket a piece of milkroot that was just about the size of a bullet, and placing the milkroot in his rifle he shot it as though it were a bullet and killed a Crow. Then all the rest of the Blackfoots placed sticks in their rifles and fired them, and pretty soon they had the Crows on the run. 159 726

When Morning Eagle finished his story, he took a black handkerchief from his pocket. He said, "This black handkerchief is my gunpowder. I think I will throw it into the stove and make the stove explode." When he said that, all of us youngsters became frightened and ran outside. Those old-timers sure did laugh at us. [522]

Inevitably during the evening the conversation would return to Blackfoot religious beliefs and ceremonies, and at length the Chief stated that he would like to have a Beaver Ceremony if only he had the money to pay for the feast. The Chief is the only living "Beaver Man" (he owns the sacred Beaver Bundle, and is the only person qualified to conduct the Beaver Ceremony), and I am anxious to see the ceremony performed and so I handed him the twenty dollar bill I had in my wallet and promised to give him a like amount tomorrow if that would make enough to pay for the feast. My dough 123 796 122

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men, as I was saying . . . All of these unflattering remarks about my daughter-in-law are merely things I overheard an old White man saying. Yes sir, that's what the old White man says."

This is a true story, not a fabrication, and the Blackfoots with their universal appreciation of humor quickly adopted Tearing Lodge's face-saving comment as a part of their everyday speech. *Kèn-yai-au-wah-nay-ndh-pi-quon* may also be expressed as *Ndh-pi-quon-sáu-wah-nay* (which means the same thing), and sometimes the final syllable is changed from *quon* to *quax* (which merely changes "man" into the plural form, "men"). At any rate, "That's what the old White man says" has become an integral part of Piegan life, and it is this same phrase that the old-timers laughingly employ to end a street-corner bull-session.

The Chief, Jim and I have all been sipping hot toddies during the story-telling, and I think that by the time I finish this we will all be ready for the sack.

chin and holding in her mouth a small stick, in imitation of the beaver. And there was a lively number called the Prairie Chicken Dance, in performance of which the women held blankets over their heads and spread their arms wide in imitation of the movements of prairie chickens. For some reason the Prairie Chicken Dance caused quite a stir of excitement among the womenfolk, and one woman (Cecile Horn) who had been standing in a doorway pulled her coat up over her head and moved out onto the floor to join the dancers. Almost immediately, another woman did the same thing.

The Blackfoots always manage to include in their religious ceremonies some occasion of pure fun, and today it was the Buffalo Dance--a real fun dance if such there ever was. The Buffalo Dance was the only co-educational dance of the day--boys can't have much fun without girls, let's face it--and if you want to have your own buffalo dance you need only music, people of both genders, and some buffalo hooves, polished and split and strung together on rawhide thongs so that they rattle nicely.

During the Buffalo Dance, both men and women remain seated on their respective sides of the room. Only one person at a time dances, the dancing beginning when a man takes the hooves and carries them twice around the room and on the second go-around tosses the hooves to a woman; then the woman dances twice around and tosses the hooves to a man, and so on back and forth until everybody has had his turn at dancing. But of course there is much more to it than that. The dancing is performed in imitation of the mating of the buffalo, and as the men dance they prance and stomp and grunt and lower their heads like bull buffalo, and the dancing women project the coyness and seductiveness of the buffalo cow. There is no set pattern for dancing--everyone is free to improvise and to dance as originally and as entertainingly as he can, and this is where the fun comes in. The whole proceeding radiates a tone of merriment and good humor, and when a man dances up to a woman she will shake her head in mock protest and flap her blanket or skirt at the "bull" to frighten him away. And when a woman dances close to a man he will grunt and hook his buffalo horns at her in an attempt to discourage her overtures--or else, with humorously exaggerated dignity, he will pretend to ignore her completely.

It was Mrs. Tom Many Guns, dressed in a beautiful Indian costume of predominating blue, with blue beadwork on her moccasins and a fine blue blanket over her shoulders, that received the hooves from Joe Horn, the young drummer. (Joe had been replaced at the drum by Fish Wolfrobe, who is blind and so could not see to engage in the Buffalo Dance.)

796 in the Buffalo Dance.) Mrs. Many Guns tossed the hooves to me,
535 and so now it was my turn on the floor. I danced once around, stomp-
522 ing and hooking my horns at the ladies and rattling the hooves at
123 them, and they laughed and pretended to be terrified by the over-powering masculinity of this fierce big bull and with threats and gestures they shooed the bull away. And the second time around, amid shrieks of delighted approval, I suddenly tossed the hooves to Mary Ground, one of the oldest ladies present—whom I had ignored completely the first time around but who had been my intended mate all the time.

796 The next man to receive the hooves tossed them to Maggie Bear
535 Child, and that Maggie Bear Child—small and round and seventy-
522 eight years old and cute as a button—is a living doll. Maggie directed her attention toward Jimmy, and those two really put on a show. Little Maggie danced as gracefully as a fawn and as coyly as a girl. She was alternately seductive and aggressive, and Jimmy was very fierce and threatening—or petrified with fear—and they both stomped their feet and hooked horns at one another, and finally Maggie backed off and charged Jimmy with little dancing steps and they butted their heads together and Jimmy at last was subdued in horn-locked combat.

Brother Jim danced then, and he is probably the best dancer on the Reservation. As a boy, Jim traveled widely, giving exhibitions of Indian dancing, and I was slightly put out that he had not worn his dancing moccasins but instead had on the same old work shoes in which he had cut wood for the breakfast fire. But if need be, Jim could dance better than the rest of us in hip boots, and he proved it now by prancing and stomping and charging and retreating and shaking his mane and hooking with his horns and spinning in small circles and hopping wounded on one foot—all with magnificent manly grace and with perfect regard for the rhythm of the tireless drums.

[181] Everyone took his turn with the hooves, and I wish that all the world could see the Blackfoot Indians as I saw them during the performance of the Buffalo Dance—graceful and gay and creative and warmly human and thoroughly wonderful. I loved them all—with the possible exception of one Ned Sparks-type Indian who, as he had done at the Pipe Dance, came late and hung around the kitchen until he had been fed and then left. I am sure he is not a full-blood because he has a face like a weak cup of tea—with lemon.

123 The Beaver Dance Ceremony was over after all us Blackfoots,
796 one by one, had knelt before the Chief and had our faces painted
302

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122 didn't stay with me very well, and by supper I was starved and ate a hell of a lot of moose meat. I was quite surprised that both Jim and the Chief were enthusiastic about the mustard greens, stewed tomatoes and canned apricots that I added to the menu. I had supposed them merely tolerant of the fruits and vegetables which I have been forcing upon the table, but in future I shall no longer hesitate to act as dietitian.

122 538 The Chief ate marvelously, grunted away from the table, and immediately went to sleep on the sofa. Jim spun some tales until eight o'clock, at which time the Chief arose refreshed and ready to tell us some stories about early and contemporary Indian politics. Most of the stories were fragmented or, at best, anecdotal, but the one story that did have any form was really a good one: this story concerned a diplomatic mission to Washington which the Chief and Plenty Treaty had undertaken in 1935. Although the narrative was at times very funny—most of the laughs were at the expense of Mr. Plenty Treaty, I am afraid—I prized it less as a sample of the Chief's humor than as an indication of his fantastic memory for detail and his remarkable powers as an orator (I think that the Chief's comparing his pockets to arrow quivers should be set down among the great oratorical metaphors of all time).

[522] [537]

THE BIG CLAIM

648 The Government owed us several million dollars for some land that they had taken from us, and for many years we had been trying to collect what was owed to us. Finally we hired a lawyer in Washington, D.C. He was the same age as I, and we Indians called him Bear Head. [Bear Head would be Mr. Serven, of the law firm, Serven, Joyce, Barlow and Goodman.]

It all happened this way: One day Bob Hamilton, the official interpreter for our tribe, informed me that there was to be an important meeting down at Helena. For the previous four years we had been attempting unrelentingly but without success to present our claim before the Federal Government, and this Helena conference was the result of a communication which I had sent to [United States Senator] B. K. Wheeler. B. K. Wheeler and his [law] partner were to be at the Helena meeting along with Bear Head and another official from Washington whom we called Morning Eagle. Also to be represented at the meeting were the Flatheads, the Gros Ventres, the Assiniboines, the Sioux and the Crows. Delegates from the Piegans in-